URCE WESTERN OBSERVER (B), FROM A SOVIET OFFICIAL STATIONED IN GENEVA.

FIELD COMMENT: THE SOVIET OFFICIAL WAS RECENTLY ON A TRIP HOME AND RETURNED FROM MOSCOW TO GENEVA ABOUT THE 2ND OF NOVEMBER. WHEN SOURCE, WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED POLITICAL TOPICS WITH HIM, ASKED ABOUT THE REACTION IN MOSCOW TO THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY THE SOVIET OFFICIAL IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHED INTO LENGTHY COMMENTARY. IT MAY BE THAT SUBSOURCE'S READY RESPONSES AND APPARENT SPONTANEITY RESULTED FROM A REFLECTION OF WIDELY HELD VIEWS. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING HIS POSITION IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT HIS COMMENTS WERE INTENDED FOR WESTERN CONSUMPTION.

1. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL STATED THAT THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY SHOCKED ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE USSR. THE POPULAR REACTION TO HIS DEATH WAS UNPRECEDENTED AND FOR DAYS THE TOPIC COMPLETELY DOMINATED MOSCOW-

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CONVERSATIONS OF PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THE HUMAN TRAGEDY INVOLVED TOUCHED EVERYONE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EVERYONE PERCEIVED THE POLITICAL ASPECTS AND BEGAN ASKING: "WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?"

2. IN THE OFFICIAL'S OPINION WE WILL PERHAPS NEVER LEARN THE BACKGROUND OF THE ACCIDENT -- WHAT REALLY HAPPENED OR HOW IT HAPPENED. HOWEVER, ONE THING IS CLEAR; THE MURDERER WAS AN ILL AND COMPLETELY CRAZY MAN--CRAZY MENTALLY AS WELL AS POLITICALLY--AND WHAT HE DID FURTHERS NO KIND OF POLITICAL PROGRESS OR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD PROFIT BY THIS ACT ARE THE EXTREME REACTIONARY FORCES.

3. EVERYONE IN MOSCOW AGREED THAT PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S DEATH WILL FURTHER INTENSIFY THE EVOLUTION OF A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE USSR. IT MAY EVEN SIGNAL A STEP BACKWARD IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. CONFIDENCE HAD BEEN BUILT UP IN THE USSR IN PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND HIS POLICY AND IT WILL NOT BE EASY FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO ACHIEVE THAT IN ANY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. TO BE SURE, THE OFFICIAL CONTINUED, PRESIDENT JOHNSON ALSO ENJOYS GREAT RESPECT IN THE USSR BUT FEELINGS FOR HIM ARE NOT THE SAME AS THEY WERE FOR KENNEDY. MOSCOW REACTION TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS WAS VERY POSITIVE AND EVERYONE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THAT HE WANTS TO CONTINUE THE KENNEDY POLICY. HOWEVER, EVERYONE KNOWS IT CANNOT BE EXACTLY THE SAME. PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS A HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL PERSON AND POLITICIAN AND NO SUCCESSOR CAN REPLACE HIM IN KIND. MOREOVER, HIS POLICY WAS PLANNED FOR THE LONG TERM AND NO

ONE KNOWS JUST HOW HE CONCEIVES FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OR EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD IN MIND FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS POLICY.

4. MOSCOW CONSIDERS PRESIDENT JOHNSON AN HONEST MAN, AN ABLE AND EXPERIENCED POLITICIAN AND A GOOD FRIEND OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO KNOWN THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON IS MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN KENNEDY AND WILL BE MORE EASILY INFLUENCED BY HIS OWN PARTY (PARTICULARLY THE CONSERVATIVE WING) AS WELL AS BY THE OPPOSITION. MOSCOW DOES NOT CONSIDER PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO BE AS STRONG A PERSONALITY AS KENNEDY.

5. ANOTHER PROBLEM MOSCOW FORESEES IS THAT THE FORTHCOMING US ELECTIONS WILL DEMAND MUCH OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S ATTENTION AND WILL ALSO INFLUENCE HIS POLICY. INTERNAL PROBLEMS WILL ABSORB HIM. HE HAS ONLY A SHORT PERIOD IN WHICH TO WIN FOR HIMSELF THE NECESSARY CONFIDENCE AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF HIS OWN PARTY, AND TO SATISFY (SIC) HIS OPPONENTS. THIS WILL NOT BE EASY AND HE WILL BE OBLIGED TO MAKE MANY COMPROMISES, PERHAPS EVEN SOME WHICH HE WOULD NOT MAKE WERE THESE PRESSURES ABSENT.

6. WHILE DISCUSSING PRESIDENT JOHNSON, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ADDED: "WE ARE PREPARED FOR A STATUS QUO IN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE US. WE WILL CERTAINLY TRY TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS WHEREVER POSSIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE WILL CONTINUE THE DISARMAMENT TALKS NEXT YEAR AS WELL AS OTHER MATTERS ALREADY UNDER DISCUSSION. HOWEVER, WE ARE RATHER MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN OPTIMISTIC ABOUT

THE CHANCES FOR FURTHER PROGRESS ON ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS."

7. WITH REGARD TO THE DISARMAMENT TALKS, THE OFFICIAL STATED THAT TSARAPKIN WILL RETURN TO GENEVA IN JANUARY AS CHIEF SOVIET NEGOTIATOR. ALTHOUGH TSARAPKIN WILL BRING WITH HIM UNSPECIFIED NEW PROPOSALS, THERE IS NO EXPECTATION ON THE SOVIET SIDE THAT ANY PROGRESS CAN BE MADE AT THIS STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND UNDER THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. HE ADDED, "WE EXPECT THE AMERICANS WILL DO THE SAME. THEY WILL ALSO COME BACK TO GENEVA WITH SOME NEW PROPOSALS. HOWEVER, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY, TOO, DO NOT COUNT ON FURTHER PROGRESS AT THIS POINT. WE WILL JUST TRY IN ALL OUR NEGOTIATIONS TO CONTINUE OUR TALKS DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD WITH THE HOPE THAT AT A LATER STAGE IT WILL SOMEHOW BE POSSIBLE TO RESUME THE PROGRESS STARTED WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY."

8. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SPECULATED THAT DURING THE NEXT YEAR THERE WOULD BE NO SPECTACULAR DEVELOPMENT SUCH AS THE PARTIAL TEST-BAN TREATY. "IN THIS QUESTION, TOO, WE WILL BE STALLED FOR QUITE A LONG TIME, EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS ALREADY A GOOD POSSIBILITY FOR REACHING COMPLETE AGREEMENT SOON."

9. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NOW TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON THE CONFUSED SITUATION, THE SOVIET STATED SOLEMNLY THAT, AS FAR AS HE KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS, THERE ARE NO SUCH INTENTIONS ON THE SOVIET SIDE. "IT COULD ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE, AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE DO NOT WANT. THERE ARE CERTAINLY ENOUGH SERIOUS PROBLEMS NOW AND WE DO NOT NEED ANY MORE. WE EARNESTLY WANT PEACE AND A RELAXATION OF TENSION IN INTERNATIO

RELATIONS. PRESIDENT JOHNSON IS A NEW MAN IN A NEW AND VERY RESPONSIBLE POSITION. WE DO NOT KNOW HIM WELL ENOUGH. WE DO NOT KNOW HIS POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO EVENTS AND WE THINK HE MAY NOT KNOW HIMSELF EXACTLY WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO REACT IF SOME DIFFICULT SITUATION SHOULD ARISE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. FOR INSTANCE, IN THE CASE OF CUBA HE CERTAINLY DOES NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO NOW AND CERTAINLY THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE ON HIM FROM VARIOUS SIDES TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE WILL DECIDE TO DO, BUT WE HOPE IT WILL NOT BE ANYTHING WRONG. IN ANY EVENT WE SURELY WILL NOT DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THE SITUATION MORE DIFFICULT AND THEREBY RUN THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR, BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT WAR, WE WANT PEACE."

10. FIELD DISTRIBUTION: NONE.

END OF MESSAGE